

TEACHERS MOTIVATION, LEVEL OF PROFESSIONAL  
COMMITMENT AND STUDENTS ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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**Abstract**

*The main thrust of this study was to investigate the relationship between teachers' motivation, level of professional commitment and students' academic performance in Social Studies in Cross River State. Two research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Five hundred students and five hundred teachers were selected and used for the study. A well validated structured questionnaire and an achievement test were the major instruments for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. Result of the findings revealed that no significant relationship exist between teacher's motivation and level of professional commitment and students academic performance. It was recommended that government and school authorizes should ensure that teachers' needs are met and government should make it mandatory that all teachers in both primary and post primary schools are professionals*

**Key words:** teachers' motivation, level of professional commitment, students academic performance

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## INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the hub of the educational system in the world generally and particularly in Nigeria. Teachers therefore constitute a great percentage of the working population and are in the forefront of the battle for national development. Their roles in the development of manpower and in the achievement of national educational goals are outstanding. It is in the light of this, the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1998:23) stated that “Teachers education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development”. Moreso, the policy stipulated the purpose of teacher education is to produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system. It is in the light of this that Okolie (1991) stated that the seven cardinal goals of education are intellectual, emotional, physical, moral, aesthetic, vocational and social development. He also opined that some philosophers have classified these variables into three major areas: development of the head, the heart, and the hands- “The three Hs”. The key to the attainment of these goals has been entrusted to some people, here-in-after called “Teachers”.

The students’ performance in junior secondary school certificate examination in social studies when compared to a subject like Christian Religious Education calls for concern. The reason for this comparison is because the two subjects belong to the same subject group in the junior secondary school syllabus.

**TABLE 1**

**Jss3 results for social studies and Christian Religious Education for the period 1998 to 2000**

Year	Subject	Total no of schools	Total enrolment	No of passes in percentage		No of failure in percentage	
1998	Social studies	12	2197	1098	49.97	1099	50.03
	Christian Religious Education	12	2197	1637	74.5	560	25.5
1999	Social studies	12	1974	849	43.00	1125	57.0
	Christian Religious Education	12	1974	1916	97.1	58	2.9
2000	Social studies	12	1879	752	40.02	1127	59.98
	Christian Religious Education	12	1899	1865	99.3	14	0.7

**Source:** Cross River State Ministry of Education Examination and Certificate Unit 1998, 1999 and 2000 masterlist result summary

Hurd (1975) noted that there is a high rate of examination failure in science by our Secondary School Science Students. He further stated that where some managed to pass, most times the credit level pass obtained is through examination malpractices of different forms. Etim (1989:2) observed that some people lay the blame on the government for their shortcomings towards school such as inadequate teaching materials, poor environmental conditions and lack

of qualified and competent teachers. She further stated that others blame the principals' administrative Efficiency while others lay blame on the teachers for their incompetence in their various areas of specialization.

Etim (1989:2) stated thus:

*In the educational system the academic performance of students is seen as purely dependent in a large part on the quality of the teacher, his teaching and facilities available which in turn depends on both the education and motivation of the teacher.*

A teacher whose needs are met is efficient and competent whereas a dissatisfied teacher is psychologically unstable and therefore not productive. A close examination of the backgrounds of Nigeria's past and present legislators, ministers, commissioners, civil servants, premiers and presidents would unearth that more than half of them were teachers at one time or the other (Edunoh, 2002:2).

According to Fafunwa (1980), public corporation, commerce and industry draw a sizeable proportion of their manpower from the teaching profession. Edunoh (2002:2-3) opined that most teachers voluntarily withdraw from the classroom because they are dissatisfied and inadequately motivated and so they look out for more lucrative, challenging and prestigious jobs. In the same vein Ejiogu (1980) stressed that Nigerian educational sector was fast losing much of its personnel to other sectors of the Nation's economy and that teachers move

into more enterprising jobs, which they considered more lucrative than the teaching profession.

Today, because of the declining economy, a worker is not adequately motivated as his needs are not satisfied. Late payment of salaries and wages; cuts in salaries and fringe benefits; inflation, mass retrenchment, premature retirement; abolition or reduced opportunity for sponsorship for in-service education and embargo on promotion have become the order of the day. So workers can no longer plan for the future because of the fact that their jobs are no longer secure. For example, in Cross River State, between 2001 and 2002, there was mass deployment of non indigenes of Cross River State from the civil and public service to their home states. Despite equality in conditions of service for civil servants, teachers' remunerations are often delayed. In Cross River State for example, fringe benefits, like leave grants since 2001 through 2003 are paid in piece meal. Promotion interview results are delayed for years. Even when they are released the implementation is delayed for yet a longer period of time.

Etim (1989:4) noted thus:

*The prestige attached to teaching in the past is no longer enjoyed by teachers who in the past have been strongly and persistently criticized and accused by the public as being responsible for the falling standard of education, low morality of youths and the general failure of education to achieve its aims. Today, the onus of the failure of education rests on the teacher.*

According to Etim (1989) loss of esteem for the profession, coupled with inadequate satisfaction of other needs, resulted in low productivity and high attrition among teachers.

Katz and Khan (1966) postulated that organizations have three basic behavioural requirements. First, people must be attracted not only to join the organization but also to remain in it. Secondly, people must perform the task for which they are hired and must do so in a dependent manner. Lastly, people must go beyond this dependable role performance and engage in some form of creative, spontaneous and innovative behaviour at work. Katz and Khan (1966) stressed that unless workers are allowed to engage in some creative spontaneous and innovative behaviour, they are bound to be incompetent.

Ferber and Miller (1981) argued that teachers are rarely allowed autonomy and spontaneity to be innovative in their teaching methods and this leaves them disgruntled. It becomes necessary to study teachers' variables and secondary school students' academic performance in social studies in Cross River State so that government and educational planners could fashion out ways of meeting teachers needs despite a poor economy.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

Irrespective of the huge investment made on education by each successive administration in Nigeria in general and Cross River State in particular, education is still unable to achieve all the objectives or yield expected



results. Student's performance in Social Studies deteriorate yearly when compared to other subjects like Christian Religious Education.

It therefore becomes a problem for educational planners and administrators to determine why the productivity of our trained Social Studies teachers is low when measured with the quality of students performance. Reasons advanced for teachers about their duties include the fact that they are not adequately motivated. Other reasons include teacher's qualification, teacher's level of commitment, in-service training and level of job satisfaction. The investigator therefore will try to probe these problems and to find out the relationship between supportive factors such teachers motivation, level of professional commitment and students academic performance in Social Studies.

### 1.3 Statement of hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between teachers' motivation and Social Studies students' academic performance.
2. There is no significant relationship between teachers' level of commitment and academic performance of students'.

## 2 Literature review

### 2.1 Teachers' level of motivation and academic performance of students'.

Ukpong (1990) carried out a study to investigate the allegation that the standard of education in Nigerian post primary institutions is falling due to teacher ineffectiveness or incompetence in their task performance,

dissatisfaction with the teaching job and low motivation. She formulated six hypotheses and used three instruments one of which was a five-point likert scale questionnaire validated and administered on six hundred (600) teachers, one hundred (100) heads of departments and five hundred and forty (540) students randomly selected from nine (9) Federal Government Colleges in the Eastern Zone in Nigeria.

The data obtained were statistically analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, Analysis of Variance, Independent t-test and Fisher's LSD multiple comparison tests, to test each of the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The results were as follows:

1. Teachers' rate of promotion has significance effects on their instructional task performance.
2. The level of need for redeployment by teachers significantly influenced their level of instructional task performance.
3. Instructional task performance is significantly influenced by teachers' level of need for upgrading while administrative and co-curricular task are not.
4. Teachers' level of effectiveness in the performance of instructional tasks was significantly influenced by their level of job satisfaction and level of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among other factors.



Ukpong (1990) therefore concluded from his result, that teachers' level of task performance and their degree of intention to remain on the teaching job is significantly influenced among other things by their level of job satisfaction and motivation.

Nirenberg (1981) observed that to increase employee's output, it is necessary to always assess the current motivational environments for preventing constraints to effective motivation or else efforts to motivate subordinates (such as teachers) will ultimately be ineffective.

He further stated that it was not enough to understand the principles of motivation, rather, the barriers to motivation must be removed. Such barriers can result from:

1. Employee's attitudes to motivation where motivational efforts are perceived as manipulative tools to increase output and not as programmes to increase performance while also satisfying their needs.
  2. Supervisory behaviour that is influenced by personal biases and prejudices and
  3. Rules and practices within the (school) organization that compartmentalize employees and are seen by them as demeaning.
- A situation where the effects of such motivational constraints is minimized, it will curtail the disruptive effect upon any programme

designed by school management and administration to increase employee's motivation and performance.36778849

In a separate article entitled "Motivation as it matters", Nirenberg (1981) posited that good working conditions re a pre-requisite for implementing motivation. He further noted that the absence of good working conditions demotivates workers and reduces their zeal. Nirenberg (1981) therefore advised that organization's pride and loyalty coupled withy efforts to improve the work environment and jobs themselves will stimulate employees to achieve their performance potential.

Inoma (1991) investigated into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and the job satisfaction of post-primary school teachers were and the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction variables of these categories of teachers.

A survey inferential, a six (6) point likert type questionnaire was designed and served on six hundred and ninety-six (696) teachers. The data obtained were analyzed using independent t-test and Pearson product moment correlation analysis at .05 alpha level. The results of the study were as follows:

1. Post –primary school teachers' in Cross River State are intrinsically and significantly motivated to work but were extrinsically significantly unmotivated to work.

2. Post-primary school teachers' are insignificantly satisfied with their jobs but extrinsically unsatisfied with their jobs. They are significantly satisfied with the achievement, recognition/appreciation, responsibility, teaching work itself self-actualization growth, school policy and procedures and interpersonal relationships, aspects of their jobs significantly unsatisfied with respect to their self-esteem/advancement.
3. There is a significant relationship between teachers' level of motivation by their different needs and their level of satisfaction of their different needs.

Based on the study findings, it was concluded that post-primary school teachers in Cross River State were not significantly motivated intrinsically to work. The areas of inadequate motivation were working conditions and salary.

## **2.2 Teachers' level of professional commitment and students academic performance**

Teachers' commitments are many and different, because of the roles that are trusted on the school as an arm of the society.

Central in the teachers' professional practice is his/her commitment to the growth needs and adjustment of learners. Teaching involves a reciprocal contact between teacher and learners (Flanders, 1970).

Teaching covers the purpose dimension, procedure dimension, the information dimension and the measurement dimension and the measurement and evaluation dimensions, (Isangedighi, 2000).

Edunoh (2002:64) asserts that most times, a teacher's commitment is tied to certain criteria such as regular payment of salaries and fringe benefits. When the reverse is the case, teachers find alternative ways of making ends meet.

Arubayi (1981) while studying the factors which affect job satisfaction of primary school headmasters in Bendel State of Nigeria, randomly sampled 100 headmasters. Questionnaire method was used for the collection of data which was statistically analyzed using t-test at alpha level of 0.05. The results of the data analysis indicated that Bendel State Primary School Headmasters were dissatisfied with their salaries. Apart from this, they also complained that they were not committed to the teaching profession because of lack of adequate motivation and that they were only waiting for better opportunity to enable them leave teaching jobs. In the same study, older headmasters expressed their satisfaction with the personal aspect of the headmastership than less experienced headmasters.

Alota and Esu (1999) researched into factors that influence teaching effectiveness of Geography teachers in Secondary Schools in North West

province of Cameroon. To achieve these five hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The instrument used was two sets of questionnaire which were administered on 150 teachers and 150 geography students. The statistical tool used for the research were Pearson product moment coefficient and one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results showed that teachers' level of professional commitment and teachers' level of participation in decision-making have no influence on their effectiveness/competence, while there was a significant relationship between teaching effectiveness/competence and teachers level of job satisfaction.

In the same vein, Esu, Enukeh and Umoren (1998:187) opined that a vital ingredient in functional curriculum implementation is teachers professional commitment and motivation. According to them teachers needs must be met for them to show commitment to the curriculum.

They also observed that when teachers needs are not met, their efforts are unrewarded through the provision of incentives, promotion, professional advancement, non-payment of salaries as at when die then it could be predicted that such innovation would face decay and eventually crumble with time.

This therefore, means that if teachers' needs are not met, they will not put in their best in the profession.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design used to the study was ex-post facto. It was ex-post facto because the study seek to investigate possible cause-and-effect relationship by observing an existing condition or state of affairs and searching back in time for plausible causal factors. A total of five hundred students and 500 teachers were selected from the secondary schools in Cross River State and used for the study. A set questionnaire for the teacher and an achievement test for the students were the main instrument used for data collection. Data collected was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient.

#### 4. Data analysis

##### 4.1. Test of hypothesis

##### Hypothesis one

The null hypothesis stated that social studies teachers level of motivation does not significantly influence students' academic performance. The hypothesis was tested with Pearson product moment correlation statistics. The result are shown in Table 1

**Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation between teachers' level of motivation and students' academic performance in social studies (n=500)**

Variables	X	S	r	Probability level
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Level of motivation	25.51	5.19	0.062	.0164*
Academic performance	35.16	11.90		

\*  $P > .05$      $df = 498$     critical  $r$ -value = .195

The results in table 1 indicate that the calculated  $r$ -value is 0.062 which means that there exists a positive relationship between teachers' level of motivation and students' academic performance in Social Studies. The observed positive relationship implies that as teachers' level of motivation increases, the students' academic performance also increases. However, since the calculated  $r$ -value is less than the critical  $r$ -value of .195 at .05 significance level and 498 degrees of freedom, it means that the observed positive relationship is not significant. Thus, the null hypothesis is retained. There is no significant influence of teachers' level of motivation on students' academic performance in Social Studies.

**Hypothesis two**

There is no significant relationship between teachers' level of commitment and students' academic performance in Social Studies. The hypothesis was tested with Pearson product moment correlation statistic. The results of data analysis are presented in table 2.

**Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation between teachers' level of commitment and students' academic performance in social studies (n=500)**

Variables	X	S	r	Significant level
Level of commitment	25.16	8.73	-0.014	.756*
Academic performance	35.16	11.90		

\*  $P > .05$      $df = 498$     critical  $r$ -value = .195

The results in Table 2 show that the calculated  $r$ -value is -0.014. This means that there exists a small and negative relationship between teachers' level of commitment and students' academic performance in Social Studies. The negative relationship implies that as teachers' level of commitment increases students' academic performance decreases. However, the observed negative relationship is not significant at .05 significance level and 498 degrees of freedom since the significant level associated with it (.756) is greater than 0.05. therefore, the null hypothesis is retained.

## 4.2 Discussion of findings

### 4.2.1 Teachers' level of motivation and students' academic performance

This study found out that there is no significant influence of teachers' level of motivation on students' academic performance in Social Studies in Cross River State.

The result of this study contradicts the views of Ukpong (1990) whose study on the influential factors of teaching effectiveness proved that poor level of motivation coupled with dissatisfaction about the job have significant impact on

the falling standard of education in the country. Ukpong thus suggested that for teachers to be made or caused to remain in their job, they should be adequately encouraged through promotions, in-service training among others.

The finding of this study is also contrary to Nirenberg (1981) who observed that in order to increase an employee's output, it is necessary to access the current motivational environment, improve it adequately so as to effectively remove constraints and stress and thus improve the teachers output. Nireberg thus advised that organizational pride and loyalty coupled with efforts to improve the work environment and jobs themselves will have to stimulate employees to achieve their performance potential.

#### **4.2.2 Teachers' attendance at in-service, seminars, workshops and students' academic performance**

With respect to the variable of in-service, seminars and workshops, the finding of this study has shown no significant influence of a teacher attending an in-service, seminars and workshops on academic performance of students.

This is probably so because what is paramount for the teacher to be able to function effectively is to be trained and acquire a professional certificate. In-service courses, seminars and workshops act on their capacity as extra-incentives to the teachers' know-how and further acquisition of working experience. The finding of this study with respect to in-service training is contrary to the view of Uche (1981) who found out that in-service training, seminars and

workshops act as catalysts or boosters for the acquisition of self mastery in the job being performed. These findings are also contrary to the assertions of the Cross River State Government (1979) which stated that in-services trainings of any kind are meant to expose officers in any capacity to their job performance, to modern and contemporary approved techniques, knowledge and skills for the purpose of enhancing efficiency, the effectiveness and performance of public officers. The findings of Nkpa (1991) are supportive of the finding of this study. In his study, Nkpa found out that once a science teacher had been trained effectively, he can continue to function in the business of knowledge transfer. He however concluded that teachers should be exposed to in-service trainings where they will further gain new methods of imparting knowledge to students.

## **5. Conclusion and recommendations**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that social studies teachers' level of motivation and level of commitment does not significantly influence students' academic performance in the subject.. It was also concluded that for students' academic performance in Social Studies to be effectively enhanced, the Social Studies teachers need must be met and job satisfaction guaranteed so as to enable them be fully committed to their job which will consequently reflect on the performance/academic output in the learners.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Base on the findings of this research and in view of the fact that teachers are indispensable in the development of educational system, the following recommendations are made.

1. Government and school authorizes should ensure that teachers' needs are met.
2. The government should make it mandatory that all teachers in both primary and post primary schools are professionals. As it is the care with other professions like law and medical among others.
3. Good working condition (i.e good pay package and incentive) should be provide by the government to attract and retain the secondary school teachers' on the job.
4. It is necessary to look into other factors that contribute to the nature of performance of students' usually recorded in external examinations, with a view to encouraging such factors in the interest of the subject and the school as a whole.

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